

**CLAIMS**

1. A method comprising:

determining whether an intermediate driver is  
present in memory; and

controlling a persistency of a device driver  
present in memory on the basis of whether said  
intermediate driver is present in memory.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein determining whether an  
intermediate driver is present in memory comprises:

receiving a message from a calling process; and  
determining, on the basis of said message,  
whether said calling process is an intermediate  
driver.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein receiving a message from  
a calling process comprises receiving an event control  
block from said calling process.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising setting said  
device driver to be non-persistent when an  
intermediate driver is not present in memory.

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5. The method of claim 1 further comprising setting said device driver to be persistent when an intermediate driver is present in memory.
  6. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
    - determining whether persistency for said device driver is pre-specified; and
    - if said persistency is pre-specified, setting said device driver to operate consistently with said pre-specified persistency.
  7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
    - specifying a default persistency for said device driver; and
    - setting said device driver to said default persistency on the basis of whether an intermediate driver is present in memory.
  8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
    - specifying a default persistency for said device driver;

if an intermediate driver is present in memory,  
determining whether persistency of said driver  
is under automatic control; and

if persistency of said device driver is under  
automatic control setting said driver to be  
persistent.

9. A server comprising:

a network-interface card;

a memory;

a device driver for interfacing with said  
network-interface card, said device driver  
being configured to set its persistency in said  
memory on the basis of whether an intermediate  
driver is present in said memory.

10. The server of claim 9 wherein said device driver is  
configured to be persistent in said memory when an  
intermediate driver is present in said memory.

11. The server of claim 9 wherein said device driver is  
configured to be non-persistent in said memory when an  
intermediate driver is not present in said memory.

12. The server of claim 9 wherein said device driver is configured to receive a message from a calling process in said memory and to determine, on the basis of said message, whether said calling process is an intermediate driver.
13. The server of claim 9 further comprising configuration data for said device driver.
14. The server of claim 13 wherein said configuration data comprises data indicative of a pre-specified persistency state for said device driver.
15. The server of claim 13 wherein said configuration data comprises instructions to disable automatic persistency determination by said device driver.
16. A network interface for enabling a computer to send and receive messages over a network, said network interface comprising:
- a network-interface card in communication with a memory element of said computer;
  - a device driver for controlling said network-interface card in response to messages received from a calling process, said device driver

being configured to set its persistency in said memory on the basis of said calling process.

17. The network interface of claim 16 wherein said device driver is configured to determine, on the basis of a message received from said calling process, whether said calling process is an intermediate driver.
18. The network interface of claim 16 wherein said device driver is configured to set said device driver to be non-persistent when said calling process is not an intermediate driver.
19. The network interface of claim 16 wherein said device driver is configured to set said device driver to be persistent when said calling process is an intermediate driver.
20. The network interface of claim 16, wherein said device driver is configured to:
  - determine whether persistency for said device driver is pre-specified; and
  - if said persistency is pre-specified, set said device driver to operate consistently with said pre-specified persistency.

21. The network interface of claim **16** wherein said device driver is set to a default persistency when said calling process is not an intermediate driver.
22. The network interface of claim **16** wherein said automatic control of persistency status by a device driver can be disabled and disabled and said device driver is configured to be persistent when said automatic control of persistency status is enabled and said calling process is an intermediate driver.
23. A machine-readable medium having encoded thereon software for controlling persistency of a device driver in memory, said software comprising instructions for:
- determining whether an intermediate driver is present in memory; and
  - setting said persistency of said device driver on the basis of whether said intermediate driver is present in memory.
24. The machine-readable medium of claim **23** wherein said instructions for determining whether an intermediate driver is present in memory comprise instructions for:

receiving a message from a calling process; and  
  
determining, on the basis of said message,  
  
whether said calling process is an intermediate  
  
driver.

25. The machine-readable medium of claim **23** wherein said instructions for receiving a message from a calling process comprise receiving an event control block from said calling process.
26. The machine-readable medium of claim **23** wherein said software further comprises instructions for setting said device driver to be non-persistent when an intermediate driver is not present in memory.
27. The machine-readable medium of claim **23** wherein said software further comprises instructions for setting said device driver to be persistent when an intermediate driver is present in memory.
28. The machine-readable medium of claim **23** wherein said software further comprises instructions for:
- determining whether persistency for said device  
driver is pre-specified; and

if said persistency is pre-specified, setting  
said device driver to operate consistently with  
said pre-specified persistency.

29. The machine-readable medium of claim 23 wherein said  
software further comprises instructions for:

specifying a default persistency for said device  
driver;

if an intermediate driver is present in memory,  
determining whether persistency of said driver  
is under automatic control; and

if persistency of said device driver is under  
automatic control setting said driver to be  
persistent.